

Message Text

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71

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SCCT-02 AID-20 DRC-01 /118 W

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P R 282331Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2324

INFO USCINCSO

AMEMBASSY PANAMA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 1770

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, GT

SUBJECT: POLITICAL CLIMATE - GUATEMALA

1. IN THE PAST TWO WEEKS THE GOG'S POSITION HAS SOLIDIFIED AND IT NOW SEEMS CLEAR THAT GENERAL LAUGERUD WILL BE THE NEXT PRESIDENT OF GUATEMALA. NATIONAL LEADERS OF ALL SECTORS ARE ADJUSTING TO THE NEW POLITICAL REALITY AND ARE ACTIVELY JOCKEYING FOR POSITIONS OF POWER IN THE NEW REGIME FOR BOTH PERSONAL GAIN AND A VOICE IN THE SETTING OF PUBLIC POLICY. THE ISSUE THAT WILL ASSUME THE GREATEST IMMEDIATE IMPORTANCE WILL BE THE BALANCE SOUGHT AND ACHIEVED BETWEEN LAUGERUD'S OFT-EXPRESSED DESIRE TO PROMOTE SOCIAL PROGRESS ON THE ONE HAND AND THE INTEREST OF HIS MAIN POLITICAL PARTY AND THOSE BEHIND IT IN RESISTING THIS ON THE OTHER.

2. ON THE POLITICAL FRONT, THE ELECTORAL REGISTRY IS
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ASSIGNING DEPUTY SEATS FOR THE NEW CONGRESS ON A

BASIS BELIEVED TO HAVE LITTLE IF ANY RELEVANCE TO THE ACTUAL VOTE AND APPEARS TO BE GIVING THE COALITION A SIMPLE MAJORITY WHILE REDUCING OPPOSITION FRONT REPRESENTATION, BUT NOT THAT OF THE PR. THE GOG HAS NOT YET MADE ANY CLEAR MOVE TO INVALIDATE THE ELECTION OF FURD LEADER LEONEL PONCIANO AS MAYOR OF GUATEMALA DESPITE WIDELY CIRCULATED CHARGES THAT HE WON BY FRAUD. CARLOS SAGASTUME HAS BROUGHT HIS SUPPORTERS IN THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY INTO THE GOVERNMENT CAMP OVER THE OBJECTIONS OF PR PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE PAIZ NOVALES, WHILE FRONT LEADER KEEP UP VOCAL OPPOSITION.

3. IN CHURCH AFFAIRS, THE GOG HAS ORDERED SEVERAL FOREIGN PRIESTS TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY FOR ALLEGED POLITICAL ACTIVITY, WHILE THE GOVERNMENT REACTED VIGOROUSLY TO STATEMENTS MADE BY SENATOR EDWARD KENNEDY ON THE ELECTIONS.

4. ON THE SECURITY FRONT, A WELL-KNOWN AND STRONG ANTI-GOVERNMENT RADIO NEWS COMMENTATOR WAS ASSASSINATED AND OPPOSITION FRONT LEADERS FEARED THAT THEY WOULD BE VICTIMS OF POLITICAL TERROR.

5. PRECEDING IS SUMMARY OF EMBASSY'S A-046 (BI-WEEKLY POLITICAL REVIEW) POUCHED MARCH 28.
MELOY

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